

DRAXY MILLER'S DOWRY.

BY SAXE HOLM.

IV.

WHEN the Elder read of Draxy's note, he said aloud, "God bless her! she's one o' His chosen ones, that child is," and he fell to wondering how she looked. He found himself picturing her as slight and fair, with blue eyes and hair of a pale yellow. "I don't believe she's more than fourteen at most," thought he; "she speaks so simple, jest like a child; an' yet, she's goes right to the pint, 's straight's any woman; though I don't know, come to think on't, 's ever I knew a woman that could go straight to a pint," reflected the Elder, whose patience was often sorely tried by the wandering and garrulous female tongues in his parish. The picture of "Little Draxy" grew strangely distinct in his mind; and his heart yearned toward her with a yearning akin to that which years before he felt over the little silent form of the daughter whose eyes had never looked into his.

There was no trouble with the town in regard to the land. If there had been any doubts, Elder Kinney's vigorous championship of the new claimant would have put them down. But the sympathy of the entire community was enlisted on Reuben's side. The whole story from first to last appealed to every man's heart; and there was not a father in town that did not rest his hand more lovingly on his little girl's head at night, when he sat in his doorway talking over "them Millers," and telling about Draxy's "writin' to the Elder."

Before the first of May all was settled. Elder Kinney had urged Mr. Miller to come at once to his house, and make it a home until he could look about and decide where he would establish himself.

"I am a lonely man," he wrote; "I buried my wife and only child many years ago, and have lived here ever since, with only an old Indian woman to take care of me. I don't want to press you against your will; and there's a house in the village you can hire; but it will go against me sorely not to have you in my house at the first. I want to see you and to see your little daughter; I can't help feeling as if the Lord had laid out for us to be friends more than common."

Reuben hesitated. The shyness of his nature made him shrink from other men's houses. But Draxy inclined strongly to the Elder's proposition. "Oh, think father, how lonely he must be. Suppose you hadn't mother nor me, father dear!" and Draxy kissed her father's cheek; "and think how glad you have been that you came to live with uncle," she added.

Reuben looked lovingly at Captain Melville, but said nothing.

"I'll tell ye what I think, Reuben;" said the Captain. "It's